

## NDEE NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 17, 2021

### **NDEE continues to assess, monitor discharge at ethanol facility**

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) responded to a discharge at the AltEn ethanol facility near Mead on Friday, Feb. 12.

NDEE staff were on site Friday and throughout the weekend to monitor and assess the discharge. The agency observed spill material in culverts up to four and a half miles southeast of the initial spill site. As of Feb. 16, the discharge is not migrating further and has not reached the Platte River. AltEn has constructed a dam south of the Highway 66 and Road 7 junction to prevent further migration.

NDEE collected samples to determine if the material contains pesticides and requested support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 7. The EPA was on site to assess the spill, collect additional samples, give advice on cleanup and help with mitigation efforts. Sampling results could take up to two weeks to return.

Today, on Feb. 17, NDEE issued a letter of non-compliance to AltEn, directing the facility to immediately construct additional barriers to prevent further migration; conduct hourly inspections for leaks on its second digester and construct secondary containment in case of a potential failure; and prevent snow melt from commingling with the spill material.

NDEE directed AltEn to provide written plans by noon on Feb. 18. These plans are expected to describe how the facility will recover, transport, and dispose of the digester material and how the facility plans to prevent and contain a potential discharge from its second digester.

On Friday, Feb. 12, at 2:30 a.m., AltEn reported that below-zero temperatures froze pipes on a 4 million-gallon digester, which caused the release of thin stillage and manure over the course of the weekend.

NDEE will have emergency response staff on site daily to monitor the situation and cleanup efforts. The agency will provide updates as they become available.